

Data Sheet

USAID Mission:	Romania
Program Title:	Improved Local Democratic Governance
Pillar:	Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance
Strategic Objective:	186-023n
Status:	Continuing
Proposed FY 2003 Obligation:	\$7,500,000 AEEB
Prior Year Unobligated:	\$0
Proposed FY 2004 Obligation:	\$9,500,000 AEEB
Year of Initial Obligation:	FY2002
Estimated Completion Date:	FY2007

Summary: The local democratic governance program provides technical assistance and training focused on three major areas, including strengthening local government management and citizen participation, increasing local political party organizations' responsiveness to grassroots initiatives, and strengthening the efficiency of lower level courts. The objectives of this program are: 1) to improve local governments' service delivery, financial management and fiscal capacity, policy-making process, transparency, and responsiveness to citizens' needs; 2) to strengthen civil society organizations (CSOs) capacity to influence and monitor local government performance; 3) to facilitate legislative changes needed to further decentralization; 4) to promote effective participation of citizens in politics and increase the accountability of local politicians; and 5) to increase the capacity of lower courts to strengthen property rights. Sub-grants also will be made to support innovative local development projects.

Inputs, Outputs, Activities:

FY 2003 Program:

Strengthen local government management and citizen participation (\$6,240,000 AEEB). Through the Governance Reform and Sustainable Partnerships (GRASP) program, USAID will assist 60 county, municipality, and town governments. Building on previous programs, USAID will support adequately funded, service-oriented local governments by focusing on 1) participatory policy-making, 2) quality and cost-effective service delivery, and 3) capacity to address citizens' needs. The program will engage communities in advocacy and problem-solving and will establish links between communities and their governments through service delivery NGOs. The oversight functions of CSOs (especially civic NGOs, social welfare groups, and professional and business associations) will be strengthened by improving their capacity to absorb accountability assistance from local public institutions. Principal contractors/grantees are: Development Alternatives Incorporated (prime) and Academy for Educational Development (sub).

Increase local political organizations' responsiveness to community initiatives (\$800,000 AEEB). Through the Opening Politics by Acting Locally (OPAL) program, USAID will work in eight counties, including the capital city Bucharest. Thirty branches of the six main democratic political parties will be assisted to help them engage CSOs in activities that will increase local participation in political reform. Reform opportunities include candidate selection procedures, constituent services, party platforms that are responsive to local needs, constituency outreach strategies, and programs for marginalized social groups (like the Roma). Principal contractors/grantees are: the International Republican Institute and National Democratic Institute (primes).

Strengthen the efficiency of the judiciary (\$460,000 AEEB). USAID will complete pilot court administration reform activities. While assistance areas are still under discussion, USAID anticipates an anti-corruption focus that will include ethics training for judges. Assistance on overall judicial reforms will continue based on targets of opportunity. Principal contractor/grantee is: American Bar Association/Central European and Eurasian Law Initiative (ABA/CEELI) (prime).

FY 2004 Program:

Strengthen local government management and citizen participation (\$8,250,000 AEED). The GRASP program will spread to 60 more local government units, while completing assistance to the first 60 of such units. USAID will provide sub-grants to support innovative ideas addressing local development. Funds may be provided to existing local initiatives that can be expanded nationally, as well as to cutting-edge proposals that pilot new approaches to identify and resolve local issues.

Increase local political organizations' responsiveness to grassroots initiatives (\$780,000 AEED). The OPAL program will focus on elections preparation, with an emphasis on building the expertise of women and youth to serve as candidates and campaign officials. Assistance to civic groups will help with watchdog and advocacy activities during elections, such as organizing candidate debates and monitoring campaign financing.

Strengthen the efficiency of the judiciary (\$470,000 AEED). USAID assistance to the judiciary that has an anti-corruption focus will be continued. Assistance on judicial reforms will be maintained based on targets of opportunity.

Performance and Results: Over the past year, USAID can report a number of achievements, including the following:

- 1) The Federation of Local Authorities, founded with USAID assistance in 2001, successfully lobbied improvements in the 1998 Law on Public Finance.
- 2) More than 40 community improvement activities were completed, including financing investment projects through the issuance of local public debt in five municipalities and setting up economic development advisory boards in three communities.
- 3) Results from 21 USAID sub-grants included two youth community centers, two volunteer centers, 12 new community-based child welfare and health initiatives, and anti-trafficking prevention and protection services. Five hundred volunteers participated in community projects, and over 700 citizens attended community planning meetings. The 21 partnerships resulting from these sub-grants leveraged \$2.6 million in additional funding.
- 4) Twenty government agencies and 37 counties undertook participatory planning processes to identify community needs and plan projects.
- 5) Two of three labor resource centers, established with USAID assistance, have become independent, self-sustaining NGOs.
- 6) The pilot court modernization project has resulted in alphabetical case assignment, revision of forms used in the courts, creation of permanent judge-clerk teams for each case, and improved collection of court fees.

By 2007, USAID expects a number of additional achievements. One, the quality of public services will improve significantly, while costs will be reduced. Two, local governments will increase their generation and retention of own-source revenues. Three, CSOs will effectively monitor and influence the performance of local public officials. Four and last, locally-based organizations will establish partnerships with local authorities to deliver services that better respond to citizens' needs.

US Financing in Thousands of Dollars

Romania

186-0230 Local Governance	AEEB
Through September 30, 2001	
Obligations	17,136
Expenditures	14,664
Unliquidated	2,472
Fiscal Year 2002	
Obligations	9,004
Expenditures	3,075
Through September 30, 2002	
Obligations	26,140
Expenditures	17,739
Unliquidated	8,401
Prior Year Unobligated Funds	
Obligations	0
Planned Fiscal Year 2003 NOA	
Obligations	7,500
Total Planned Fiscal Year 2003	
Obligations	7,500
Proposed Fiscal Year 2004 NOA	
Obligations	9,500
Future Obligations	0
Est. Total Cost	43,140